

# American Woman Only Still Denied Her Fair Share of Serious War Work

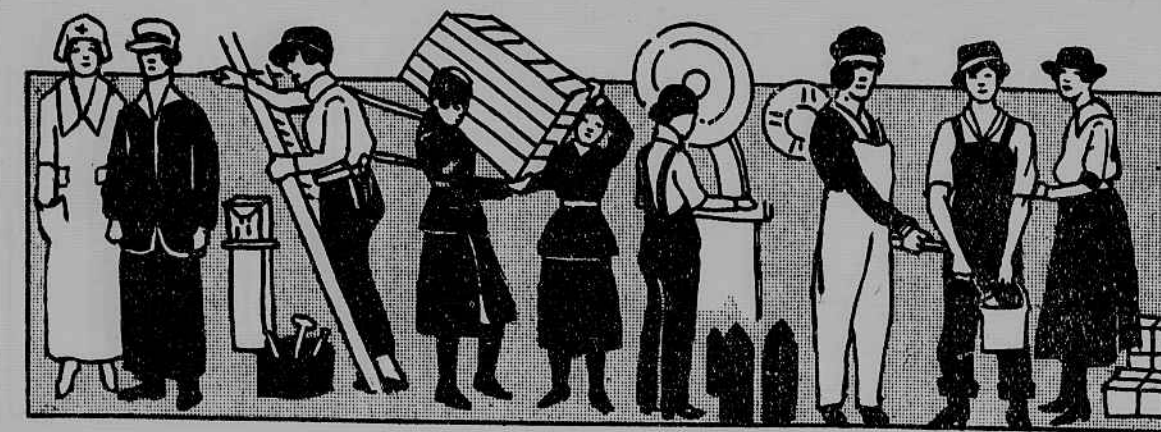
In Washington She Is Permitted to Knit, Talk Children's Welfare and Keep a Huge Letter File

By Ralph Block

THIS is a story about women. It is not the usual story about women. It isn't the story we've been hearing for the last quarter-century about women. It has nothing to do with the story of the fight the women have made to exercise their judgment in government. But it is a tragic story just the same, tragic because deep down in it lie so many stupidities, so many official hesitations, such thinness of imagination on the part of some of the men who are making war for us.

It is a tragic story because it involves such an enormous wastage of devotion, of patriotism, of that strange endurance that women have in overpowering quantity. And it is even a comic story. For it is the story of Washington's refusal by its silence to put the women of America enduringly and powerfully into the job of keeping the nation on its feet. And it is a refusal in the face of the most wearing, sapping, crazing and brutalizing experience that the years have brought to humankind.

Waiting always used to be a woman's job in war time. It isn't any more. They know it now in France, in England and in Germany. They know it in all of the United States of America, but it hasn't been discovered yet in the District of Columbia. Washington still believes faithfully that woman's job in war time ends when she has pledged her kitchen to the Food Commission and has done her stint of trench knitting and Red Cross bandaging. It may look benevolently but scarcely seriously upon an adventurous lady trolley conductor or here and there a daring lady elevator woman. It has still to learn, and even more to understand, that in England the women



are turning by the thousands under intelligent government direction to running a country that is more and more stripped of its men.

Washington does not yet officially know that while the men of England are at the guns, not only do the thousand factories shake and tremble at their vast job under the hands of women, but the thousand farms grow green and yield their golden treasure to the women as well; that English women are raising meat to feed English people and drawing the milk for English babies.

## The Belief That Woman Should Wait

Meanwhile, in our own United States American women sit twiddling their thumbs, making sporadic attempts here and there in a great country out of a great unsatisfied yearning to be of use in the great war. Washington goes on naively believing that waiting is the woman's job in war.

We are a conventional people. Even war—this war—is insufficient to jolt us out of our conventional attitude. One of these attitudes faces on women. Women, we hold, and at least this is true of an important part of Washington—are only women. As such, they can do a valuable work for us. They are excellent help when it comes to saving food, admirable in any kind of social service. They have a cooperative method, which we have never rightly understood and that has always seemed to us to be more a game than anything else, that does manage to get

things done if they are not too important. So we'll give the women some of these things to do. Feed their patriotism. Get them started on knitting, though goodness knows we don't take their knitting very seriously. But it's good psychology, anyway. We'll organize the homes. Keep the women enthusiastic; that's what we want.

Last spring several women (they happened to be rather important women, educated by experience in knowledge of the capacities of American women) made a call on Howard Coffin, in Washington. Mr. Coffin was a member of the advisory commission to the Council of National Defense. He was told that the women were waiting to take their part in the war, and they wanted to know if the Council of National Defense had considered any plans for them. The council had not. The council had some ideas on the subject, Red Cross, food, knitting, etc., to which these deliberate women made the objection that as a war programme it was far and away too small and insufficient.

What, then, would these several women themselves propose? They were prepared for that.

They proposed first that the women have a part in the extended machinery of the government, manufactured to facilitate getting the nation ready for war. And then they proposed that a definite programme be drawn up, a programme that might well enough include knitting in its various branches, but which would be devoted foremost and significantly to the functioning of women in the actual production of food and clothing and munitions of the country. America, they said, was a great nation, but the war showed signs of becoming a great and prolonged war; and if the signs were good signs it would be prolonged enough to gravely deplete the farms and the factories of their man power. When the

man power showed indications of running low, they wanted to see that woman power was not of every side to step into the breach, just as it had stepped in to fill the gaps in France and in Britain.

Mr. Coffin probably pondered this. It is possible that several other members of the advisory board to the Council of National Defense pondered it. At any rate, there followed shortly the appointment of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense. The women's committee was intended to coordinate the powers of women in the United States. That far it was an answer to the programme that had been laid before Howard Coffin. But there it stopped short. It resembled all other advisory committees to the Council of National Defense in that it lacked the power to do anything but advise. On the up road it advised an advisory commission. It worked downward through dozens and dozens of committees, through state councils to state committees to county committees, to community committees and sub-committees.

Held to advice, what were the women going to do?

This is the way their programme reads:

- 1—Registration for service.
- 2—Food production and home economies.
- 3—Food administration.
- 4—Women in industry.
- 5—Child welfare.
- 6—Maintenance of existing social service agencies.
- 7—Health and recreation.
- 8—Educational propaganda.
- 9—Liberty loan.
- 10—Home and foreign relief.

It is a very good programme, but it is not necessarily a war programme. It gives but the vaguest hint of the right-about-face for women that the experience of England in the great war projects into our own future. In its own way, however, it is not a futile programme. It is able to accomplish enough to illuminate the vast emptiness it might fill if it had the power.

This is an instance: The District of Columbia now has a housing commission which is trying desperately to find quarters for government employees. It is a new commission. It took a courageous woman to bring it into being. When several organizations had tried in vain to get an appointment with an important member of the advisory commission to the Council of National Defense, she demanded an appointment and got it. When she had finished describing the meetings in which timid but earnest housewives offered to house hundreds and retired in confusion when they found thousands of men coming; when she had finished telling him of the dangers to strange young girls in Washington, he established a housing bureau the next day. It is a pleasant bureau of its kind. It has housed hundreds of people who want homes and has told them where to go to get them. But it is still a body without power to do any more than that, and the housing problem, with all its dangers, still hovers over the capital.

## Women Failed At Cantonnements

Somehow the women failed at the cantonnements. It wasn't to their interest to fail, because it turned out to be their sons, their brothers and their husbands who died of meningitis and of pneumonia. And properly commanded they might not have failed, as indeed they did not fail at one of them. It was Camp Grant, at Rockford, Ill., that was saved from the unseen enemy that was invading every other cantonnement. When the first cold snap came unexpectedly in September, local agencies of men and women together had 17,000 blankets ready in storage to carry to Camp Grant. They were blankets from the farmers' wives roundabout, each with a farmer's name sewn in it. Private motors gathered them up and carried them to camp. There was no meningitis. There was no pneumonia, at least in the same measure as it invaded other camps. But for one cantonnement so finely protected by local initiative and enthusiasm there have been a dozen others sorely unprotected because there was little response in local action to the appeal of Washington, unencured by power to bring action about.

To be fair to the women's committee, however, it has done a good deal to interest the women. It has reacted into corners that the several national organizations of women have never been able to fill with any light. This is the work of education, of exhortation, of stimulation and encouragement and guidance. It is even the work of organization and of that blessed process called in the Washington tongue "coordination." But it has nothing to do with initiation of new projects, clearly seen from a national perspective; nothing to do with utilization in new and immediately necessary channels of all the potential force that lie in the nation's women. And war is no time for education, unless it is an education that will yield definite, certain and speedy results. The results themselves, if you will go to the headquarters of the women's committee and ask for yourself, are not magnificent from any angle of viewing.

## A White Building And a Letter File

The office of the women's committee has a letter file that reaches to the ceiling. It is filled with letters of women who want to take some real part in the war, but for whom there is no place. It is an illuminating letter file. An examination of the work of the women's committee reveals nothing more than that the white

building opposite the British Embassy on N. Street is a well conducted letter writing bureau. All the admirable accomplishments of the things that are going to be done, although the committee has been living ten months, things that are on the horizon or in abeyance for the time because some department with actual power enjoin secrecy. In the nature of the case it would be impossible to have done more. It is true that in April the committee will begin a nation-wide educational campaign to reduce the infant mortality one-third. But even the prospect confesses the weakness of the plan, and hints at the drawback of doing a national job without the aid of national power. England, so the story goes, had government aid directly applied to a similar programme. But in the United States it must be effected by purely advisory methods through local and always unofficial agencies.

The most significant section of the whole programme of the Women's Committee is concerned with war in industry. Members of the committee confess it has nothing to do with the actual transfer of women into industry. It is only supplementary, hovering about the edge of the problem, preoccupied with all sorts of human loose ends, but never once touching the real question of putting the untrained woman into training for a war job. The net result of ten months is to put a member of the committee on an advisory labor council of the Department of Labor, now holding executive sessions on a reading of the letter of labor that is bound to appear when the conclusion of women about women. It may mean the beginning of a programme of the inclusion of women in investigations of the war in industry. It is hopeful, even if it does come six months after a million and a half men in the holes that call for readjustment.

The final basis for criticism of the organization of women for women in the United States is that nobody is willing to put women into the spaces that are bound to appear when the concentration of man power in the factories, machines becomes more intense. Washington ought by this time to be aware of what has been happening in England, and Washington replies to any question as to why America should move in the same direction that the time isn't ripe yet. The land army in England recruits women for the land, and the navy recruits women for the navy, and the government organizes the labor of farm production. All this goes on under the intelligent direction of the National Board of Agriculture. These women raise live stock, poultry, care for horses, plough and plant, spread manure and reap the harvest.

## Woman's Idea of Her Province

The Women's Committee has itself foreseen the danger in a recent pamphlet, when the demand for men in the armies and munition plants will force the women to the farms to supply the food essential to victory. Yet timidly the pamphlet pictures a future and, vegetable gardening, poultry, oranges and dairy products—these are looked on as a proper province for woman's aid in the food war. They are, it is true. But they scarcely impinge on a circle which grows wider and wider as the war increases and the Allied pantry grows barren. It is to the credit of the pamphlet that it advises women to learn to manage horses, so they can drive reaper and binder and ride cultivators, if they would actually contribute toward victory.

But action on this suggestion is not forthcoming. The women themselves lack the power to put it into effect, although they are wide awake to its possibilities and to its future need. An opinion that seems to be growing in Washington is that it is not the secretary Houston, it is that industry rather than agriculture is the road for the women to travel. However that may be, it is true that, continued in its present course, at the end of the year of war will find the United States delivering its farm labor to battle and leaving behind thousands of brown acres with no hands to bring them to greenery again. If it requires a change in social attitude to organize a land army of women, the needs of war surely ought to provide an incentive sharp enough to bring about a change. The women themselves are the best to bring about. They have shown abundantly they know how to take care of themselves. Their desire to help is unfailing and strong. Surely the several gentlemen who composed the Council of National Defense ought to be sufficiently concerned and sufficiently intelligent to recognize the ability of the women to do a great deal of work and to find a way for the women actually to get into this battle for survival at their full strength.

## U. S. Corn Easing Famine in Mexico

Committee Reports Increased Number of Cars of Cereals Imported

Reports in the Mexico City press as well as from other sections of the republic demonstrate the constant amelioration of the scarcity of grain in some portions of the republic through wholesale purchases made in the United States, as well as from other sources, notably the surplus crops in certain of the states.

The Sustenance Committee, which was appointed to handle the matter, announced a few days ago that a great part of the corn that had been bought by it in the United States would soon arrive in the city. The committee reported a continuance of the purchases of corn in the United States by its agents, and an increase in the number of cars sent to Mexico with this cereal.

It was stated in Vera Cruz that large amounts of flour, condensed milk, etc., had arrived in that city from the United States, and that an entire steamer load of supplies was due from the same place. Torreon reported confirmation of permission to receive corn from the United States by way of Laredo, and also that proper arrangements had been made for the distribution of the grain where needed.

Several foreign companies have applied to the American government to permit them to import corn into Mexico for the use of their employees. This is in addition to the exclusive permission to bring articles of prime necessity into the country—chief among which is corn.

The Committee on Sustenance also announces that it will convey to Mexico City various other articles of prime necessity as well as corn, such as beans, lard, flour, etc., and that the only obstacle in the way of bringing in abundant supplies is the lack of sufficient water transportation on account of the war.

# ABRAHAM AND STRAU'S BROOKLYN

These Offerings for Tuesday, Lincoln's Birthday  
Store Closed Monday

## A Record Breaking Sale of Women's New Fashion Spring Suits

\$17.50

Not a month later, nor two months later, nor at any time during the season will it be possible to offer better values than embodied in these Suits for anywhere near this price. We are offering these Suits as extraordinary Anniversary values, and the savings are great enough to buy a stunning Hat in addition.

### Five Distinctive, Delightful Tailor-Made Models

Of fine serge, gabardine and wool poplin, in navy and black. There is the new rolling-collar to the waist-line model, with crushed belt buttoning with five mannish buttons. An over-collar of coin-stopped beige silk faille. A new frock-coat back style that is semi-belted. A new twin-pleat model. Patch pockets, slit pockets and without pockets. The beautiful fitting qualities of each size from 32 to 44 are the result of the expert man-tailoring. All Coats are lined with beau de cygne silk. The skirts are in several well-tailored styles.

## New Plaid Skirts, a Sale at \$5.50

They are remarkable, specially offered values that cannot in the regular order be duplicated at this price.

Eight stunning patterns and color-combinations, from the invisible plaid to the distinct sports colors, and from the tiny check to colorful cubes. Combinations of black and white included. Made with crushed back, crushed, slit-through belt, and smart pockets in various styles. Sizes 25 to 32 inch waistband.

## 500 Pairs of Women's Smartest Lace Boots at \$4.95, were \$7.50 to \$10

Mahogany brown calf, with suede tops and military heels; patent leather with suede tops and backs, Louis heels, and so on. Perhaps a dozen styles that are the favorites of the season. The size-range is incomplete in any particular style, but every woman will find several good-looking styles in her size.

All are arranged in size order, so that choosing will be very simple. Gold and Silver Cloth Evening Slippers at \$3.95 Pair, Were \$5.95. In square throat opera style, with hand-turned soles and covered Louis heels.

Men's Shoes at \$2.95—Were \$4.95. Just 150 pairs of black kidskin shoes in lace style, with solid leather soles that are welted and stitched. A medium toe-last. Some tan shoes are in the lot, but not in all sizes.

## Dollars To Be Saved in This Sale of Hosiery and Underwear for Everybody

Buy all you feel you can afford. There are 8,100 pairs for women and children alone! Every pair of Stockings bought in this Sale means a nice little sum saved later. Duplicates of most of them cost more already. These are the old low prices, in a Special Anniversary offering. Also excellent underwear items.

2,400 Pairs of Women's Stockings at 19c. Pair. Samples and broken sizes of better grades in our own stocks. All worth more. At 29c. pair—Fine cotton balbriggan Stockings with double garter tops. Well reinforced at heels and toes. Sizes 8 1/2, 9 and 9 1/2. At 39c. pair—Finely woven colored mercerized seamless Stockings. Pearl gray, medium and dark gray, tan and dark tan. All sizes to start with. At \$1.29 pair—A. & S. make silk Stockings, all full-fashioned; all higher-priced grades. In these very desirable shades—livery, medium and dark gray, silver, taupe, bronze, cordovan, Russia calf leather color. Also black and white. Lisle tops and soles. All sizes. Street floor, Central Building. 900 Pairs of Children's Ribbed Lisle Stockings, 24c. Pair. These were 33c. pair, and good values at this price. All black; seamless; in sizes to 8 1/2 only. WOMEN'S UNDERWEAR. Women's Swiss Ribbed Vests at 24c. Regular and extra sizes. All extra good grades. Low neck band top finish, in regular sizes. Extra sizes with crocheted edge. Some slightly imperfect. At 98c.—Ribbed cotton Combination Suits, shaped to fit nicely. Desirable weight and in these excellent styles—Low neck, sleeveless, with wide knee, deeply lace trimmed. All regular sizes. At \$1.29—White merino Vests and Tights of medium weight. Vests are low neck and sleeveless; Tights knee length. Regular sizes. Extra! Boys' Balbriggan Shirts and Drawers at 29c. Shirts have short sleeves. Knee length Drawers. Sizes 26 to 32. Street floor, Central Building.

## Hand-Made Oil Opaque Window Shades 59c, Reduced from \$1.00

Made from the very best materials in our own workshop. Curtain Scrims, 10c. Yd. Linen Cretannes, 98c. Yd. Fancy bordered and colored in a number of attractive designs. Beautifully printed. Imported. For slip covers and draperies. Scrim Curtains with Fancy Borders, at 69c. Pair, from \$1.00. Third floor, Central Building.

## More Anniversary News for Tuesday

A Phenomenal Sale of Laces, Embroideries and Dress Trimmings Offers Savings Running Up to Half and More. Street floor, Central Building. 6,876 Pieces of English Porcelain Dinnerware in a Great Sale at Very Low Prices Includes a 31-Piece English Porcelain Dinner Set at \$3.95. Street floor, Central Building. Queen Anne Design Living Room Suites in the Half-Yearly Furniture Sale Are 25% Below Regular Prices at \$170.3 Pieces. Fourth floor, Central Building. 250 Small Wilton Rugs of Famous Makes, \$10.50. Tenth floor, East Building. 624 Women's Smart Cotton Dresses in a Great Value-Giving Offer at \$3.95. Second floor, Central Building. 1,200 Untrimmed Straw Hats in Another Great Purchase at 89c. Street and Manhattan floors, East Building. Sale of 3,000 Pieces of Remarkably Fine Linen at 76c., 84c., 94c. Second floor, East Building. Women's "Sample" Spring Coats That Are Unusual Bargains at \$24.75. Second floor, Central Building. \$55 to \$115 Savings on Women's Hudson Seal Coats (Dyed Muskrat). Second floor, Central Building. Misses' New "Trench" Coats at \$16.98 and \$19.50. Second floor, Central Building. Amazingly Lovely Georgette Crepe Blouses at \$2.79. Second floor, East Building. Women's French Kid Gloves, \$1.39 Pair, Instead of \$2. Second floor, Central Building. Women's Linen Handkerchiefs, 11c.; Seconds of 9c. 19c. and 25c. Grades. Street floor, Central Building. Our Most Unusual Offering of Diamond Jewelry Includes 14k. Gold Brooches at \$11.45, That Should Be \$15 to \$19. Street floor, Central Building. 3,000 Suits Men's Pajamas at 98c. Street floor, East Building. Men's Cotton Socks, Unusually Good, at 17c. Pair. Street floor, East Building.

Men's Suits at \$17; Overcoats, \$18.50. Second floor, Men's Shop, East Building. Havana Cigars in Boxes of 50 at \$1.89. That Were \$2.25. Street floor, Men's Shop, East Building. Boys' New Blouses, Unusual, at 69c. Second floor, West Building. Men's and Women's Umbrellas at 96c; From \$1.49. Second floor, West Building. An Economy Sale of Lenten Foods Includes Priscilla Salt Mackerel, 5-lb. Pails, at 99c. Each. Third floor, West Building. 500 Bread Mixers at \$2.29; Reduced from \$3. Second floor, East Building. New Scarfs and Pillow Slips at 59c. Third floor, Central Building. Anniversary Specials in Linens Include Table Cloths and Napkins of Double Satin Damask at \$9.98; Were \$13.50 to \$15.50. Street floor, Lexington street, East Building. Extra Length Sheets and Pillow Cases Special; Sheets, 1 1/2 x 2 1/2 Yards, \$1.37 Each. Second floor, West Building. 6,000 Yards of Messaline Satin, Regular \$1.39 Grade at 98c. Yards. Street floor, Lexington street, West Building. All Wool Epingle at \$1.38 Yard; Our Regular \$1.69 Grade. Second floor, Lexington street, Central Building. Moire Percale at 23c. Yard, from 35c. Yard. Second floor, Lexington street, Central Building. White Organdies for Graduation, 40 Inches Wide, at 30c. to 45c. Yard. Street floor, Central Building. 2,000 Pieces of Satin Taffeta Ribbon, Regularly 7c. Yard, at 4c. Street floor, Central Building. Bed Spreads, Fine Values at \$6.50 and \$6.98 Set. Second floor, Central Building. 2,400 Pairs of Women's Stockings at 19c. Pair. Street floor, Central Building. Children's and Misses' Lingerie, Special at 98c. Offers Regularly Higher-Priced Princess Slips and Combinations. Second floor, East Building. Goodrich Rubber Company Golf Balls, 3 for \$1, or \$4 dozen. Fourth floor, West Building.

Fulton Street  
Bond Street  
Livingston St.  
Elm Place  
**Frederick Loeser & Co., Inc.**  
BROOKLYN - NEW YORK

## In Compliance With the Government Regulation Loeser's Will Be Closed Tomorrow This News Is For TUESDAY

## New Shapes and Attractive Values in Trimmed Hats at \$2.95 to \$6.75

ALL THE NEWEST SHAPES of the earliest spring, including turbans, roll sailors, mushrooms, walking shapes, etc. Such smart materials as all ribbon, lisere straws, chrysanthemum braids, straw and satin combined, etc. Natural colors and every smart color tone, including black. Trimmings of cre ribbons, quills, fancies, flowers, etc., all applied in the newest ways and conferring special distinction. Unusually fine values at \$2.95 to \$6.75. Second floor, Elm Place.

## Half Silk Crepe de Chine at 39c

THOUSANDS OF YARDS of sheer, lustrous half-silk Crepes de Chine at 39c, a yard head a special holiday budget of fine Dress Cottons values. There are twenty-seven shades, including all the dainty tints as well as the more staple colors. Ideal for summer frocks and lingerie and a value unequalled for 39c. a yard. Second floor.

## Now Another Special Purchase of Blouses, Dollar Values at 79c

IMPOSSIBLE TO DUPLICATE these in your home for the price, if you consider your own work worth anything at all. Often impossible to do more than purchase just the bare fabric.

They include white voiles, and the smart color striped voiles, and have a remarkably well set-up look, due to the excellence of their cut and the care of their finish.

Those of white voile are semi-tailored, low collar style, with hemstitching, tucks, and some with lace. Others with collars of embroidered organdie. Those of color striped voile have self or pique collars and cuffs. Very exceptional values at so small a price as 79c. Second floor.

## 35-Inch All Silk Chiffon Satins, \$1 Yard

A HANDSOME CHIFFON SATIN, less than the cost of production at only a dollar a yard. Sold only in five and six yard lengths, and none C. O. D. A fine assortment of evening and street shades.

40-Inch All Silk Colored Satin Charmeuse, \$1.29. Smart neutral shades and black; a fine two-dollar value.

40-Inch All Silk Colored Crepes de Chine, \$1.35. Extra heavy quality for the price; evening and street shades and black.

40-Inch All Silk Colored Georgette Crepe, \$1.48. Regular two-dollar quality in endless range of colors; black also.

40-Inch All Silk Black Satin Charmeuse, \$1.48. Pure silk, fine quality, \$2.50 value. There is also a broken range of good colors, besides the black.

40-Inch All Silk Showerproof Foulard Silks, \$2.50. Exclusive, marvelous and striking designs, the product of the world-famous maker of Foulards, and a tribute to his skill. Main floor.